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Boom in foreign interns

With job markets suffering all over the world, many foreigners see China as a shortcut to experience.



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The savior of art

Artists from Rembrandt to Rockwell owe a thank you to Robert K. Wittman.

Life in a 'Harmonious Corner'



This "Harmonious Corner" in the Yida Community, Xicheng District is one of 622 senior centers opened by the Beijing government.

The city plans to set up 200 such "Harmonious Corners" in residential communities across the city to provide the aging populace with convenient shopping assistance, welfare service and charity.

The plan will include 60 percent of the city's 1,116 residential communities in the capital, home to some 7.9 million elders, by 2015.

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First corruption team exits from law school

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Korean president a fan of Chinese culture

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Pensioners stuck at a crossroads

By Zhao Hongyi

Care of the elderly is a growing social problem. Premature deaths and mass migration have left some 80 million elders stranded in the countryside.

Ordinarily, the social security system would be expected to take care of them. However, a sharp decline in birth rates and increase in life expectancy have created a wave of elders who need more support than China's workforce can provide.

Once 300 million people begin collecting social security, the system will hit a breaking point. Finding ways to care for these elders and protect their health has become an urgent task.



Elders at the boarding home in Qiantun Village, Hebei Province

Photo by BYD

Abandoned to age

Zhang Guosheng, 68, cares for another 81-year-old senior at a boarding home in the village of Qiantun, Hebei Province.

Every day, he washes the man's clothes, cooks his meals and chats. In return, another retiree will one day perform the same service for Zhang.

The men and women living here have no children on whom they can depend. In Zhang's case, his wife died when his youngest child was seven years old. He never remarried.

His children have left with their own spouses and children to earn a living in the city.

"It's better to live in the boarding home," Zhang said. "At least here you can have someone to chat with."

"When your children start their own families, you can end up cast aside. The grandfather can't compete with the child for attention," he said bitterly.

His story is not unique. There are more than 40 elders like Zhang living in Qiantun.

Zhang Yuhe, 75, lost his wife five years ago and died unnoticed in his own home. He was discovered dead three days later when his friends came to ask him to join them in a game of mahjong.

Of Qiantun's 1,510 villagers, some 147 are older than 60. Among these, 35 live alone and have no surviving children. Another 25 have children, but live away from them, said Cai Qingyang, the village's party secretary.

In greater Feixiang County, in which Qiantun is located, 31 percent of the elderly residents have no living children.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs estimates there are more than 50 million abandoned elders across the nation.

Gov's response

Qiantun responded to the problem by clearing land occupied by an abandoned school and building a community home for the elders.

Although Cai supported the move, the entire village united

in opposition: most saw a move to the boarding house as a loss of face.

Funding was another problem.

It took great persuasion to bring in the first six elders. Three months later, the boarding home had 15 residents.

Elders are required to pay for their own food, clothing and medical treatment. Inside, they are classified as part of the "young group" or "old group." The "young group" is required to provide basic care services.

Qiantun's boarding home has been operating for five years.

The model of using elders to care for other elders was borrowed from France, which has been using it for more than 40 years.

The central government seems to see hope in the model, as the Ministry of Civil Affairs allocated 3 billion yuan for its promotion nationwide.

There are more than 30,000 boarding homes in villages and communities across the nation,

with 338 in Beijing's Haidian District alone.

Long-term solution

Traditionally, elders used to remain with their children. After 1949, the government took on the responsibility of caring for the aged.

But the traditional family has changed during the past three decades. The old system of total government support has collapsed.

The whole country is searching for new ways to take care of elders – especially those without children or who live far from their families.

At first, the government called on society to open more boarding homes. However, poor financing made them unsustainable.

Afterward, the government called on social organizations to step up and take responsibility. Many boarding homes are now supported by NGOs.

But these too are struggling to remain open.

A good example in Beijing

is the Songniantang Boarding Home on the east side. It was founded by an NGO and remains in operation today. However, the owners have started to complain about hard work and limited financial support.

China's Law on Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Aged, passed this week, holds children who fail to frequently visit their parents liable for criminal neglect.

The clause has been widely criticized as being completely unrealistic and contrary to current social obligations.

It also banned boarding homes from selling their space for advertising, which the government said could be harmful to the elderly residents.

"In China, staying with children is still a common practice," said Wang Jun, a professor of social science at Peking University. "We are still searching for a more popular and sustainable method to help elders live together."

First batch of corruption busters graduates

Three years ago, the nation's eyes were on 30 students who enrolled in China's first course dedicated to training investigators to bring down corrupt officials.

Today, those students are beginning their mission.

Six students completed their training last year to graduate with a Juris Master (JM) degree. The remaining 24 graduated last month and have already gone on to find jobs at procuratorates.

The remaining may find openings at banks, securities companies, enterprises and schools.

The investigation class was created by the Supreme People's Procuratorate and Renmin University of China in 2010.

During the first semester, students learned much of the same curriculum as normal law students. After the second semester, they focused on learning procuratorate theory and criminal investigation.

Eight tutors included members of procuratorial committee, deputy directors from the Anti-Corruption



The new graduates are expected to help the Chinese government in its battle with corruption.

CFP Photo

Department, a procurator from the Beijing Procuratorate and the vice president of the National Prosecutors College.

Students also served a three-month internship in the corruption fighting departments of several

procuratorates.

The students were praised for their professional capacity in learning how to deal with specific cases in a short time.

Responding to doubts about the real function of the project, He Jiahong, teacher

of the criminal investigation class, said success can only be judged in the future by determining whether the students have grown into a powerful force in the nation's procuratorial system.

Wang Liming, deputy director of the Anti-Corruption

Department, said the class filled a glaring hole in the nation's legal system.

Cultivating experts takes time, but the reforms led by this class will play a meaningful role in China's battle with corruption, he said.

(By Bao Chengrong)

NGOs offer job training to adolescent migrants

By Liu Xiaochen

A good vocational program can help place many young migrants in skilled trades when they would otherwise be locked out of the job market.

But for many years, China has been plagued by a vocational education system that is woefully out of touch with actual market demand.

Save the Children, an international, independent organization for children's survival, protection and development, is looking for a solution.

The group recently held a roundtable with China Foundation Center (CFC), a third party information platform, and other experts and business representatives to analyze social employment and enterprise demand.

The problem of employment is due to the improper preparation during one's school years, said Chen Yu,



Professor Chen Yu says China's secondary and vocational education is disconnected from the market's needs.

Photo provided by CFC

vice president of the China Association for Employment Promotion and professor of the China Institute for Occupation Research at Peking University.

"Your work today is not related to your exam scores," he said. "There is a severe misunderstanding in current education. Many parents think

that as long as their children succeed in their exams that they will succeed at life."

"School is just a preparation for a job," he said.

Students are being controlled by tests: they are learning to cope with exams instead of build the skills needed by the market, he said.

Secondary and higher voca-

tional education are too far removed from actual economics and production, he said. "Vocational education is just copying general education, which is a gross departure from its original intent of training students to find work."

Most young migrants work in logistics, construction, hospitality or assembly. They are faced with astronomical living costs and reduced training opportunities.

Chen said that vocational training is better in such an environment, and can help the migrants to enter larger enterprises.

"China's GDP is among the world's largest thanks to the labor of our workers on the front lines of production and service – the most important spot for migrant workers who acquire their skills through vocational training," he said.

Zhang Fan, a business

representative, said young migrants who have not been trained can have a hard time meeting enterprise demand.

"Their role in society decides what they should do. The youth need to try to find ways to meet their employer's needs," he said.

Skills to Succeed, the latest program by Save the Children, helps young migrants to get the most out of vocational education and develop a career path relevant to the local labor market.

The program already has 3,000 participants in Beijing and 7,000 in Shanghai.

Students learn to develop their personal strengths and confidence by learning essential social and business skills.

It also provides the foundation for a multi-sector migrant support network and advocates for policy changes that can improve the lives of young migrant workers.

Foreign graduates flock to China for job experience

By Bao Chengrong

China's 6 million graduates who remain trapped in a job crunch might do well to take a lesson from their foreign peers.

More and more foreign students are taking the opportunity to do an internship in China as preparation for the job hunt.

Francesca McMullen's degrees in chemistry and pharmacology were of little help when it came time to find a job in Australia.

That's when the Sydney University decided to come to China.

"It's a very hard time to find work in Australia," she said. "As a new graduate I had no experience."

With the help of CRCC Asia, the leading provider of internships in China, she got a chance to work at Oasis International Hospital in Beijing in May. She has been helping the doctors to communicate with patients and will soon begin labeling medicines.

McMullen sees the coming mission as a big challenge.

"That will be quite hard because they (the staff) don't speak English and I don't know any terminology in Chinese. This is what I am trying to learn here, especially the medication names. It's already very hard in English," she said.

Although McMullen will not be paid for the internship, she still considered the experience valuable.

"I don't think many internships in China are paid. If you decide to come to China, then that's how it is. In Australia, internships are often paid, but they are really hard to get," she said.

She said it was impossible for her to get the same kind of experience at an Australian hospital, because the country requires its interns to have a medical degree.

She said the job also gives her a chance to improve her Chinese and make friends with students from other countries.

Luke Galland also found an internship through CRCC Asia. Although most of his friends headed to Spain or Italy, Galland chose China.

"My mother used to work in China and she always spoke highly of it," he said.

He has been working at BES Talent Search Consulting for a month to help international companies contact potential candidates.



With the help of CRCC Asia, more interns are coming to China.

Photos provided by CRCC Asia



Foreign interns enjoy their leisure time in Beijing.

He makes 15 to 20 calls each day. Those who have poor English usually hang up.

"Sometimes I yell in Chinese and they hang up on me," he said. "You just have to speak slower and they can understand you better. Patience is probably the most important part."

He said the internship experience would be great for his resume and attractive to US employers. He also sees it as a good chance to learn more about Chinese culture.

"The US is boring. Here,

there is always so much going on," he said.

Galland said he enjoys karaoke bars. However, he was surprised to see wait staff chasing him to give back his tips. He said the move to China was not a cultural shock because he used to travel a lot with his family.

Edward Holroyd Pearce, co-founder of CRCC Asia, said there has been a surge in foreign interns heading for China in the last five years. The project has grown from drawing 20 interns a year to as many as 1,500.



Foreign interns at work

Pearce, who studied Chinese at Cambridge University, learned that some of his friends want to come to China hoping to be something other than an English teacher or a backpacker. It inspired him to think about internships.

"We hope foreign students can learn Chinese business culture through our project," he said.

Finance is still the most popular sector, but many interns are choosing to work in engineering and green technology, he said.

"I think China is doing significant work in those sectors. When foreign students see the headlines, they see China is fighting pollution and developing new green technologies," he said.

As for engineering, Pearce said it may be due to CRCC's shift in focus to the US market that began in 2009: the US has more engineering students than the UK.

CRCC opened a satellite office in Sydney last year.

Pearce and his colleagues compile data about potential partner companies. To judge

whether to cooperate with a company, he considers the company's environment, the English ability of its supervisors and the value it offers its foreign interns.

Pearce said some companies employ discriminatory hiring practices and do not want to take interns who are black or Indian descent – even when they are natural citizens of the US, UK or Australia.

Overall, the company has had 97 percent positive feedback, he said.

One former intern said the experience changed his career plans and decided to work for a small private investment firm.

"He saw the potential of the Chinese market and realized working for a big investment bank was not suitable for him," Pearce said.

Some have stayed to work in China after their internship.

Pearce said the Australian government has been working with universities to pay the internship costs for some students. More than 30 interns received support funding this year.

Korean president shares interest in Chinese culture on visit

By Liu Xiaochen

South Korean President Park Geun-hye spoke to students at Tsinghua University during her visit to China on June 29.

Although the majority of her 20-minute speech and her answers to three follow-up questions were in Korean, Park surprised the students by referencing several Chinese proverbs.

The political leader has long had an interest in China and its culture.

In 1979, when Park Chung-hee was assassinated, Park Geun-hye began read Chinese

classics such as *The Analects*, *Zhenguan Politicians*, *Mirror* and *Meditation* to find peace and comfort.

In her autobiography, she professed a love of historical novels. Her favorite hero of the Three Kingdoms Era is General Zhao Yun. She also fond of Chinese scholar Feng Youlan's *History of Chinese Philosophy*.

Park attached great importance to her official visit China.

On June 25, she prohibited her accompanying officials from drinking alcohol or going to any massage par-

lors to avoid the embarrassment suffered by the US on its recent visit.

When Park assumed office, she changed South Korean history by sending her first delegation to China instead of the US, its longtime ally.

Some scholars think Park Geun-hye attaches importance to China for more practical considerations. China is South Korea's largest trading partner, and it has an important role in South Korean economic diplomacy. China is also the mediator in much of the dialogue between South Korea and its northern neighbor.

Park Geun-hye visits Beijing Hyundai

By June Pan

Park Geun-hye, president of South Korea, visited Beijing Hyundai Motor's third factory in China on June 29.

Dressed in a violet blouse and grey pants, Park enlivened the dull assembly line environment.

Chung Mong-coo, chairman of Hyundai Motor Group, and Xu Heyi, chairman of Beijing Automotive Group, accompanied Park Geun-hye on her visit.

The group's first stop was the production line, where the workers hospitably received them.

President Park greeted the workers in both Korean and Chinese. During her talk, she expressed a deep interest in auto production and engaged the workers in a discussion of the assembly process.

During the past few years, Beijing Hyundai has become a trendsetter in the Chinese automotive market.

Last year, its cumulative sales volume exceeded 4 million cars. It averages 860,000 cars per year with an annual sales growth of 15.7 percent.

Beijing Hyundai is currently China's No. 4 automo-

bile manufacturer.

At the end of her visit, Park Geun-hye wrote a message to congratulate Beijing Hyundai on the completion of its third factory. She expressed her hopes for the company's continued development.

Park Geun-hye's visit to Beijing Hyundai's new factory was a landmark event in the company's history and a milestone for Chinese-Korean trade.

Her visit showed her hopes that the countries' trade and cooperation will continue to be of mutual benefit in the coming years.



South Korean President Park Geun-hye arrives in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province.
CFP Photo

China still top market for German enterprises

By Liu Xiaochen

German enterprises still regard China as the world's most important partner for continued investment, according to a recent business report.

"German Business Confidence: 2013 Status and Outlook of German Companies in China," the report, was published by the German Chamber of Commerce in China after a two-month survey of its 502 member companies.

Respondents said China's economic environment is looking up, especially for German companies in southern China who have seen a rise in exports.

In the next five years, German enterprises in China

will focus on the local market's development and on making China their innovation base.

The potential consumption capacity and proximity to the customer group are the main reasons German enterprises are choosing China. For nearly a third of those enterprises, more than 40 percent of which are involved in plastic and metal processing, low production cost is also an important factor.

The investigation shows that less than a fifth of the respondents are still producing products for export, which is 11 percent less than that in 2012.

Nearly two thirds of the companies felt growing pres-

sure from the Chinese local enterprises, while only 5 percent said they felt no pressure. Compared to 2012, 33 percent more companies said the pressure came from the innovative ability of Chinese enterprises.

Based on this situation, more than a half of the German companies are planning to enhance their products and services in China – especially in the machinery manufacturing industry.

German companies in China had a positive attitude toward meeting annual objectives in the second half of the year: 78 percent said they would meet their yearly goal, a 10 percent increase over 2012.

According to the investigation, the expected profits and sales of the German enterprises in China will continue to grow.

New investment will focus on electronics, automobile manufacture, chemicals, plastics and metals processing. Shanghai, Beijing and Chengdu are the economic areas in which German enterprises are most interested.

More than half the respondents said they were supported and helped by the local government, especially in the second-tier cities, where 10 percent more said they were receiving assistance.

Protection of intellectual property rights was a focus of the German enterprises this

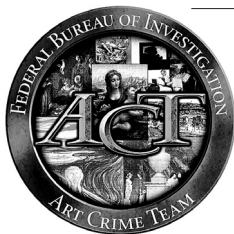
year. More than half of those surveyed said they considered it one of the top challenges of 2013.

Personnel and labor issues continue to be a problem for German enterprises in China. Compared with the 2012 survey results, the problem of finding and retaining personnel has slightly decreased.

But increasing labor costs have become a problem for more than 80 percent of the enterprises. Improving productivity will be essential for future development.

The spike in social security costs and unstable currency have caused some German companies to scale back their China operations.

Retrieving the priceless



By Chen Nan

FBI Special Agent Robert K. Wittman was, a one-man army dedicated to tracking and recovering priceless treasures. Among his achievements are saving a Rembrandt painting and recovering rare Civil War memorabilia. His work turned the FBI's art crime team into one of the world's most respected.

But his greatest case was one conducted undercover as he tracked the criminal masterminds behind the world's most audacious art theft.

His book, *Priceless: How I Went Undercover to Rescue the World's Stolen Treasures*, is now available in Chinese.

One-man army

A white Rolls-Royce roared down Florida's I-95 highway toward Miami Beach. In the car sat six stolen paintings worth \$1.2 million and bound for a Colombian drug trafficker.

At the beach, the pickup glanced out his window to see when the thief would arrive.

Bob Clay, the man in the car, was a world renowned art merchant who bought up many of the world's most valuable works.

There's only one problem: Bob Clay didn't exist.

The alias was one Wittman used while working undercover, especially for the governments of Italy, France and Greece.

During his 20 years with the FBI, Wittman used a carefully constructed identity as a shady art dealer to infiltrate domestic and foreign criminal networks and retrieve millions of dollars' worth of art and antiquities.

His book provides detailed descriptions of how stolen cultural property was returned to its rightful owners.

Among his most noteworthy saves were 14 original copies of the Bill of Rights belonging to North Carolina, paintings by Pissaro, Monet and Picasso, a Rembrandt self-portrait, a sculpture by Rodin, two paintings by Francisco Goya, five Norman Rockwell paintings, Geronimo's eagle feather war bonnet and a 50-pound crystal ball from the Forbidden City.

A living legend

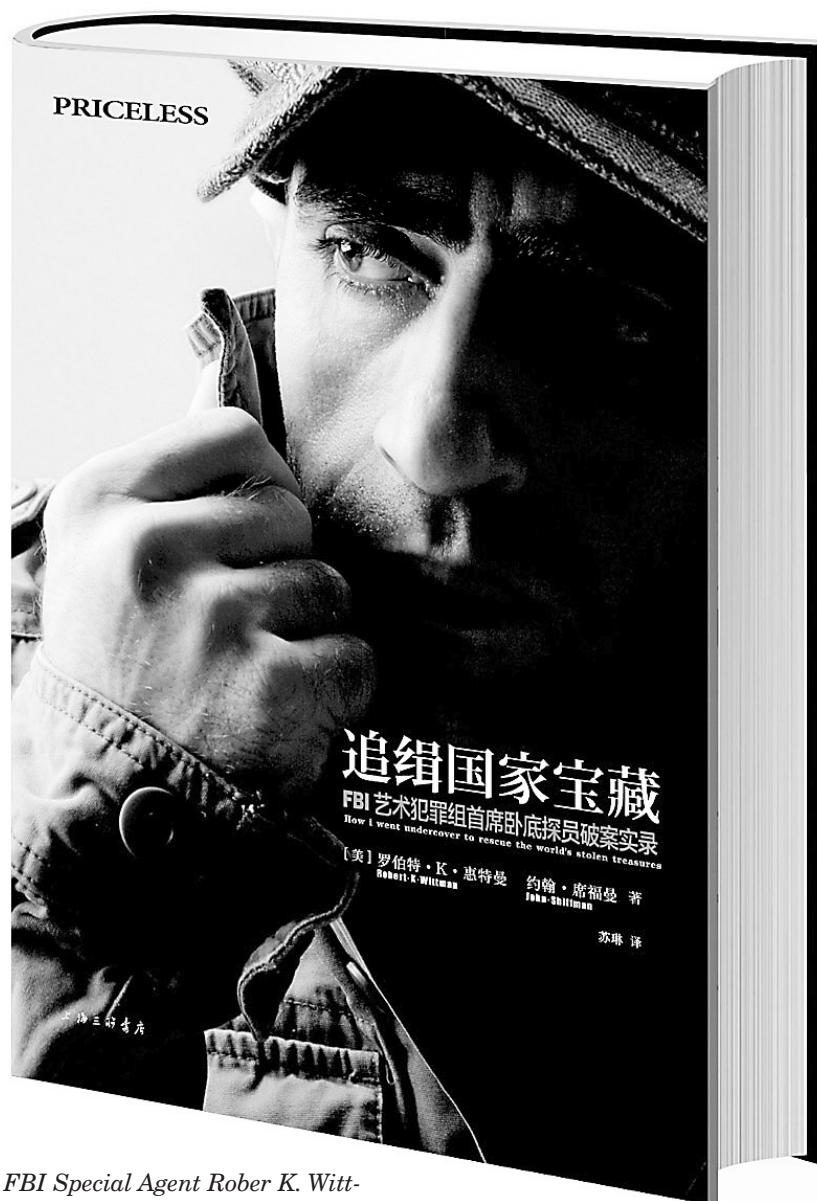
The Wall Street Journal has called Wittman "a living legend" and the *London Times* dubbed him "the most famous art detective in the world." *The New York Times* called his book a "rollicking memoir," as if an art history textbook got mixed up at the printer with a screenplay for *The Wire*.

Wittman has come closer than anyone else to unravelling the most mysterious museum robberies.

"Stealing those objects is like stealing our history. I can't stand by while robberies and art crimes happen," he said.

The explosion in art prices after the 1960s made art theft irresistible. Since then, the crime has evolved dramatically with high profile robberies inspiring copycats.

As an engaging memoir, the book gives people a look at the real-life challenges of art



FBI Special Agent Robert K. Wittman's book about recovering art is available in Chinese.

Photos provided by Shanghai Sanlian Bookstore

crime investigation. His encounters with the associated criminals make for some riveting chapters.

Real-life challenges

Three people armed with machine guns stormed the Swedish National Museum in Stockholm and ordered everyone to get down on the floor in late December 2000.

In the following 40 minutes, the gang took two Renoir paintings and a 1630 self-portrait by Rembrandt.

At the same time, two car bombs went off on the main roads leading to the museum. The thieves made their getaway on a high-speed boat while the police were unable to follow.

Wittman was called in to help them retrieve the paintings and find who took them. He went into the field, posing as a crooked art dealer looking to purchase the Rembrandt. He decided to meet the thieves in a hotel room in Copenhagen after several rounds of negotiation.



Wittman works with foreign agents.

He went undercover as an authenticator for an Eastern European mob. Then he pretended to haggle over the price, settling on \$250,000.

As he faced the criminals alone, a Danish SWAT team was waiting for his signal to move in and make their arrests.

It took some money and some convincing before the fourth accomplice finally brought the painting to the hotel. "Then at that point, we were able to recover the \$36 million Rembrandt," he said.

He said that thieves are rarely the dashing and ingenious cat burglars portrayed in movies: they were usually amateurs with very simple plans designed to let them walk off with a masterpiece.

"The art thieves I caught run the gamut from rich to poor, smart to foolish, organized criminals to desperate loners; one thing is definitely true, they are not as legendary and elusive as the shown in Hollywood movies like *Entrapment*," Wittman said.

Since his retirement in 2008, he has served as a member of the Department of State's Cultural Antiquities Task Force and a consultant to the FBI.

Presently he also instructs insurance companies, institutions and private clients on how to locate and safeguard cultural property. He even runs his own art security business.

Road to fame

It took many years for Wittman to become the FBI's rock star investigator. He cut his teeth as a reporter for an agriculture newspaper in Baltimore.

"But that experience really helped. Being a journalist and an agent share some similarities. If I want to cover a feature I need to set up an interview and draft some written materials – especially when I am trying every way to reach someone who has never heard of me," he said.

"That mold gave me the character to be an agent in the following years."

Weddings and gift ideas

By Annie Wei

This week, we scouted new wedding venues for those getting ready to tie the knot or purchase housewarming gifts for the recently married.



For weddings

Couples who want to entertain family and friends at a lavish weekend wedding can't go wrong at Jianyi Jingyuan, Haidian District.

The venue is located near the Fragrant Hills and has a beautiful, spacious lawn.

What impressed us was its Chinese style wedding hall, complete with Shanxi mansion architecture, high ceilings, window walls, wood pillars and a black marble floor.

It also provides wedding services such as carriage rental, table decoration and catering.

Jianyi Jingyuan

Where: 18 Xiwa Guoyuan, Yuquan Lu, Haidian District

Tel: 8259 6669



Jianyi Jingyuan can provide the perfect wedding.

Photos provided by Jianyi Mansion

Gourd-shape kitchenware

Need some cool kitchenware for your house party? We recommend this set by architect Zhang Yonghe.

His bottle gourd-shaped kitchenware is made of fine bone porcelain.

Grown up in Beijing, Zhang developed a fascination with the flatware of northern China, especially the *piao*, which is made of a halved bottle gourd.

"The concept behind the *piao* is smart and clear," Zhang said. Although the *piao* has been used for many years, it had no analog in kitchenware design.

Zhang's design is simple yet elegant: its pieces come apart like a single bottle gourd that has been segmented to create tools, bowls and plates. The pieces can be reassembled for storage.

Brand New Store

Where: B1 Sanlitun North, 11 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am - 8:30 pm

Tel: 6416 9045



Gourd-shaped oil and vinegar bottles

Photos provided by Feichang Jianzhu



Inside Les Patits Dara
Photos provided by Dara

French vintage furniture

Looking for French vintage furniture to update your child's room? Try Les Patits Dara in the Lidu Hotel area.

The store's furniture style focuses on a mix of Asian and European, using natural materials such as woods, lush fabrics and pottery.

Small items like bathroom bottles, photo frames and lamps start from 300 yuan. We liked its two-level cradle (1,980 yuan), suitable for children younger than two years old. The lower level can store the baby's clothes and toys. It is available in dark and light tones.

A well-made French vintage closet costs 3,880 yuan; a wood bed with bamboo-shaped poles costs 19,800 yuan; and a white framed baby bed costs 8,000 yuan.

For older children, we recommend the colorful French vintage sofa (4,980 yuan) with small silk pillow cases (168 yuan).

Les Patits Dara

Where: 1F, Building 9, Lidu Hotel Apartment, Jiangtai Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am - 8 pm

Tel: 6437 6330

Delicious meals at good deals

By Annie Wei

It's hard not to notice how much more dining costs in Chaoyang District than it did only a few years ago.

Unfortunately, food quality has hardly kept pace.

This week, *Beijing Today* reviews three places that offer good deals.



Smooth egg custard

Yunnan food at bargain prices

Midian is located one alley south of Fangjia Hutong in a small bungalow with four tables. The interior is homey and cozy.

This place is a real gem, with prices far lower than any Yunnan restaurant in the central business district.

Among its best deals are a tomato dish

(10 yuan), spicy chicken with sauce (36 yuan), jasmine flower salad (28 yuan), special Yunnan fungus in oil (34 yuan), palm flowers (38 yuan), sautéed jasmine flowers with eggs (32 yuan), sautéed sponge guard (20 yuan), lime braised fish (68 yuan) and steamed chicken with sticky rice (38 yuan).

We recommend its palm flowers, which are made from fried banana tree flowers and taste like bamboo shoots. Banana trees are common in

south China, and their tender leaves are a popular local food.

We also tried its lime braised fish (68 yuan), a steamed bass with a lime juice base and topped with chives and red chili peppers.

A bowl of traditional Yunnan rice noodles (18 yuan) comes in a serving large enough for two.

We also ordered papaya water (6 yuan). It's like the bitter herbal jelly dessert available at many Cantonese restaurants, but sour and sweet. The white jelly is made of papaya powder, and the juice is mixed with squeezed papaya juice and brown sugar.

Skip the local beers and try the rice wine (6 yuan).

Midian

Where: 57 Jiaodaokou Bei Santiao, Dongcheng District (third alley on the right when walking north from Jiaodaokou)

Open: 11 am - 3 pm; 5-10 pm; Closed Mondays
Tel: 6402 7482



Homestyle Yunnan dishes

CFP Photo

Hunan food critic's favorites from 55 yuan

Cuiqing Jiujia, a small eatery near West Fourth Ring Road, is a must-try if you love Hunan cuisine.

For more than a decade, food critics have recommended it for its "authentic and inexpensive" dishes.

Today, Cuiqing has grown to become a chain with outlets in Haidian, Chaoyangmen and further east.

Many diners say the original location remains the best.

Hunan cuisine makes heavy use of chili peppers, and Chinese diners pay less attention to a Hunan restaurant's dining environment than

the quality of its salty, sour and hot flavor.

Classic dishes include duojiang yutou (68 yuan), steamed fish heads with chopped peppers; xiaochao ganjian (48 yuan), fried pork liver and flavorful peppers; ganguo yuza (58 yuan), dry wokked fish; and chouguiyu (138 yuan), braised, fermented mandarin fish.

The eatery is small and the service is average. Bring your patience if you're planning to dine here.

Cuiqing Jiujia

Where: 1 Cuiwei Dong Li, Haidian District

Open: 11 am - 2:30 pm; 5-9:30 pm

Tel: 6825 2634



Singed salmon, yellow tail and red tuna sashimi

Photos by An Jianda

Star-hote's Japanese set menu from 108 yuan

Since June 10, Sheraton Beijing Dongcheng Hotel has been guided by the culinary expertise of Toshiyasu Uehara, guest chef at its Japanese restaurant Miyabi.

Uehara has 30 years of experience and is a master of Kaiseki, a traditional light and delicate multi-course Japanese meal created by Zen monks. In ancient times, ascetic monks ward off hunger by putting holding warm stones near their bellies.

Miyabi offers two set menus of six courses priced 298 and 398 yuan. All meals are designed for two.

From the tasting menu, we started with salmon tartar, a seafood roll and Japanese wine-steamed goose liver.

The second course was a house specialty: shrimp balls and mushroom soup.

We liked its singed sashimi of salmon, yellow tail and red tuna, which tastes better without its fat and greasy rawness.

The beef tenderloin and goose liver mille-feuille with lemon vinegar sauce came in a big serving, and the tenderloin was well cooked.

If you're looking to beat the recent heat wave, you can't go wrong with matcha pudding: it's fresh, smooth and delicious.

Although Uehara left the hotel today, Miyabi will continue to offer seasonal set menus starting from 108 yuan per person for lunch.

Miyabi

Where: 2F, Sheraton Beijing Dongcheng Hotel, 36 Beisanhuan Lu, Dongcheng District

Open: 11 am - 2:30 pm; 5-9 pm

Tel: 5798 8703



Spicy bullfrog legs

CFP Photo